

# Pathway to Pathways; Exploring Why Students Enroll In Pathway Program

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## INTRODUCTION

This research project examines why students choose to enroll in the Pathway program at Parkland versus

- becoming a Parkland student that will transfer to the University of Illinois
- or just beginning their college career at the University of Illinois.

### Parkland Pathway Program

This program was created to make the transfer process to the U of I easier for Parkland students. The students in this program are allowed to take up to 5 credit hours at the U of I per semester. The students are full-time at Parkland and will take the majority of their classes at Parkland. They have access to facilities at the U of I.

### Who is Eligible?

This program is available to high school graduates within Illinois and the priority goes to first-time college students in the Parkland District. A variety of majors are offered through the participating colleges in the program.

What part of the Pathways program was the most appealing/influential in your decision to join the pathways program?  
"We can have access to all of the U of I's resources for price of Parkland's tuition rates."

How did you find out about Parkland Pathways? "My aunt she lives in Champaign and she told me about"

## METHOD

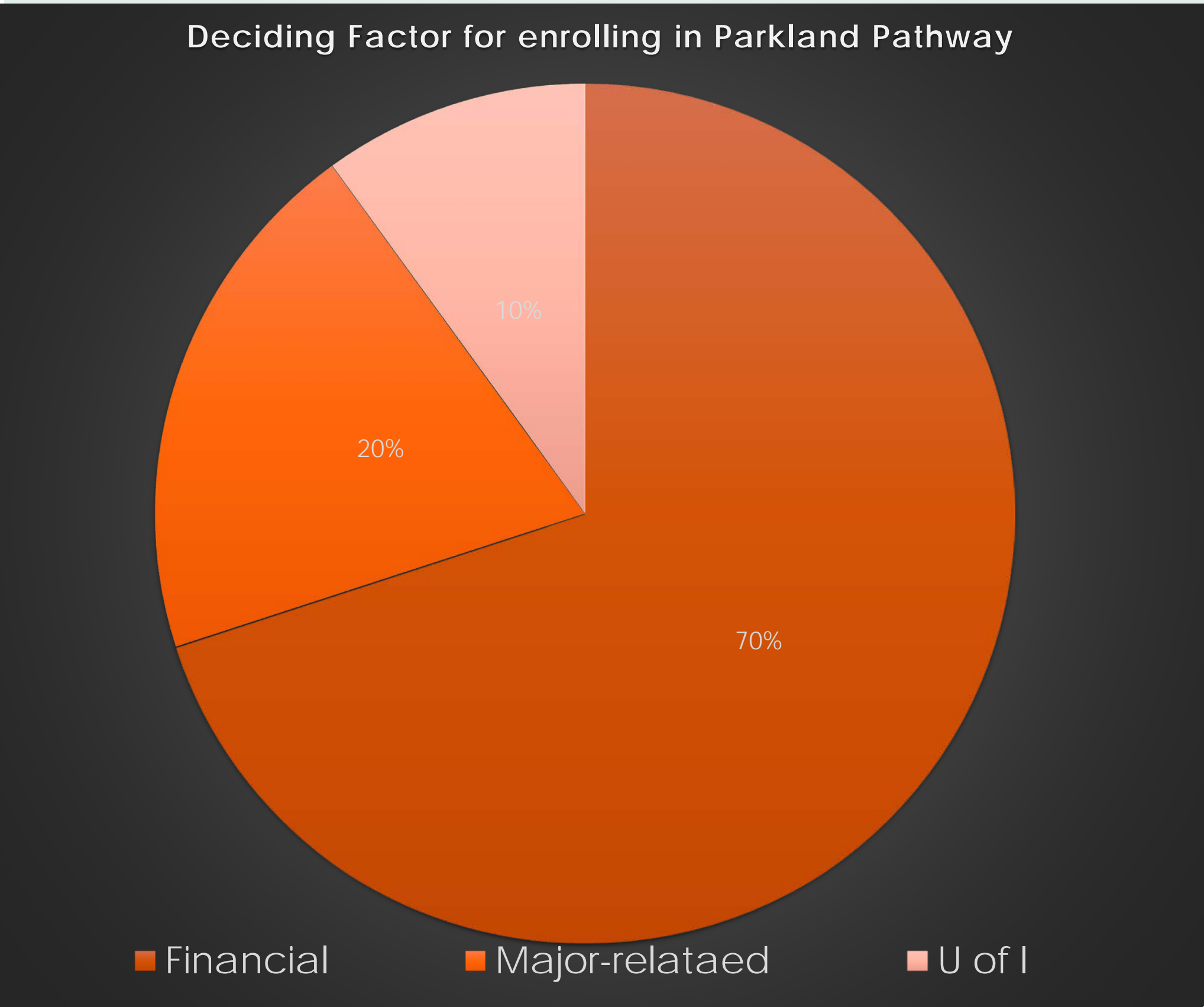
The method I used to collect data for each group of students is an in-person interview. I approached each student in a neutral, public setting and proceeded with the interview.

I interviewed current Pathway students, former Pathway students that completed the program, former Pathway Students that left the program and U of I students. The quotes were answers to a few of the interview question from current and past Parkland Pathway Students

## RESULTS

Parkland Pathway Students that I interviewed discovered the program via older friends, family and acquaintances that had been in the program or through school faculty.

Majority of the Pathway Students are satisfied with their progress in the program and the direction they chose in the their college within the program. Their major did not affect their decision to enroll in the program. About 1/3 of the interviewees were undecided in their major and that did not affect them joining the program.



The most influential deciding factor is the **cost effectiveness** of the Pathway program. Other factors that influenced the students' decisions are

- experience in large lecture classes at the U of I
- Benefit of community college style of classes
- The close proximity of both schools to home
- The variety of colleges that participate in the Program

The University of Illinois Students I interviewed heard of the Parkland Pathway Program but only after being admitted as a student at the U of I.

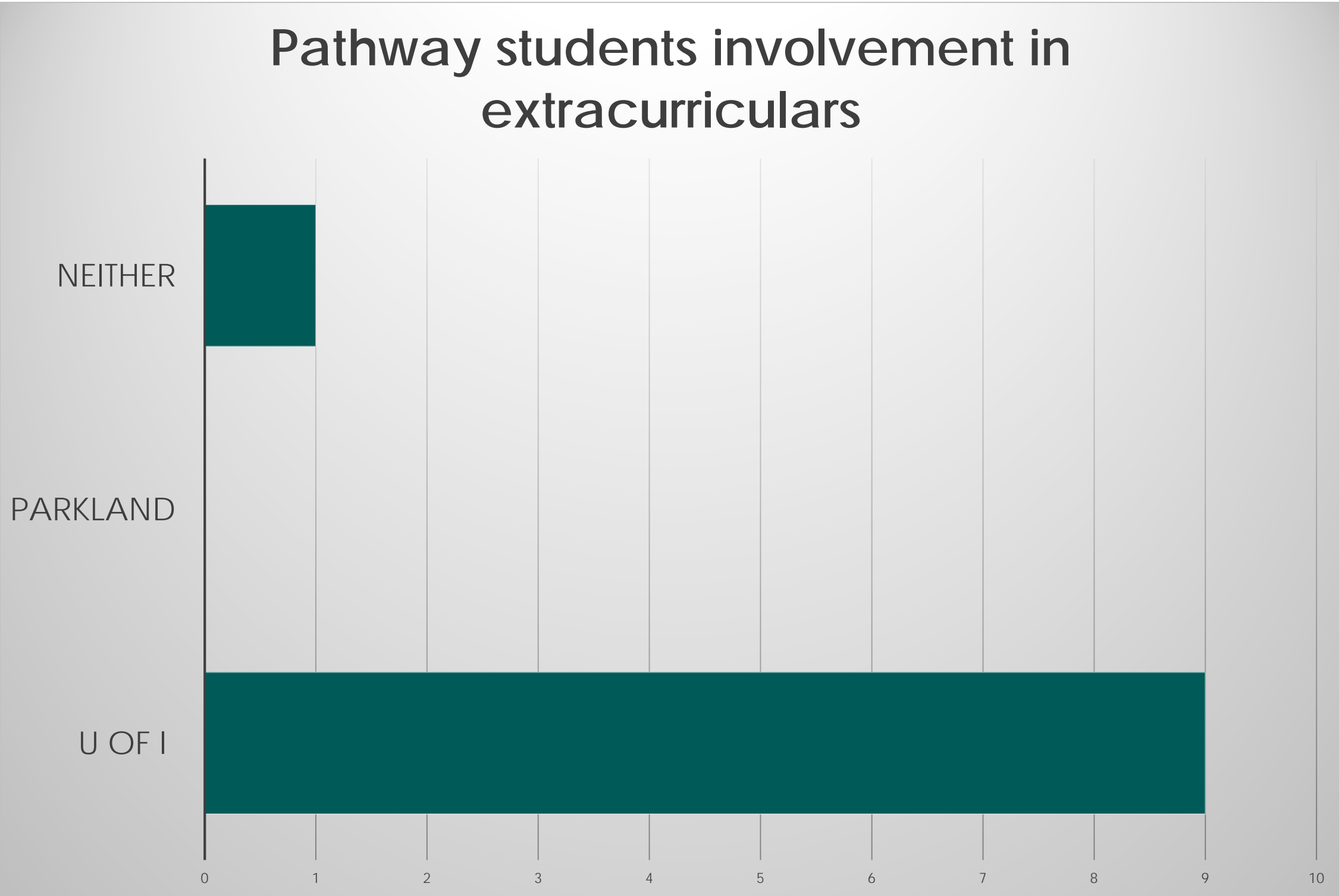
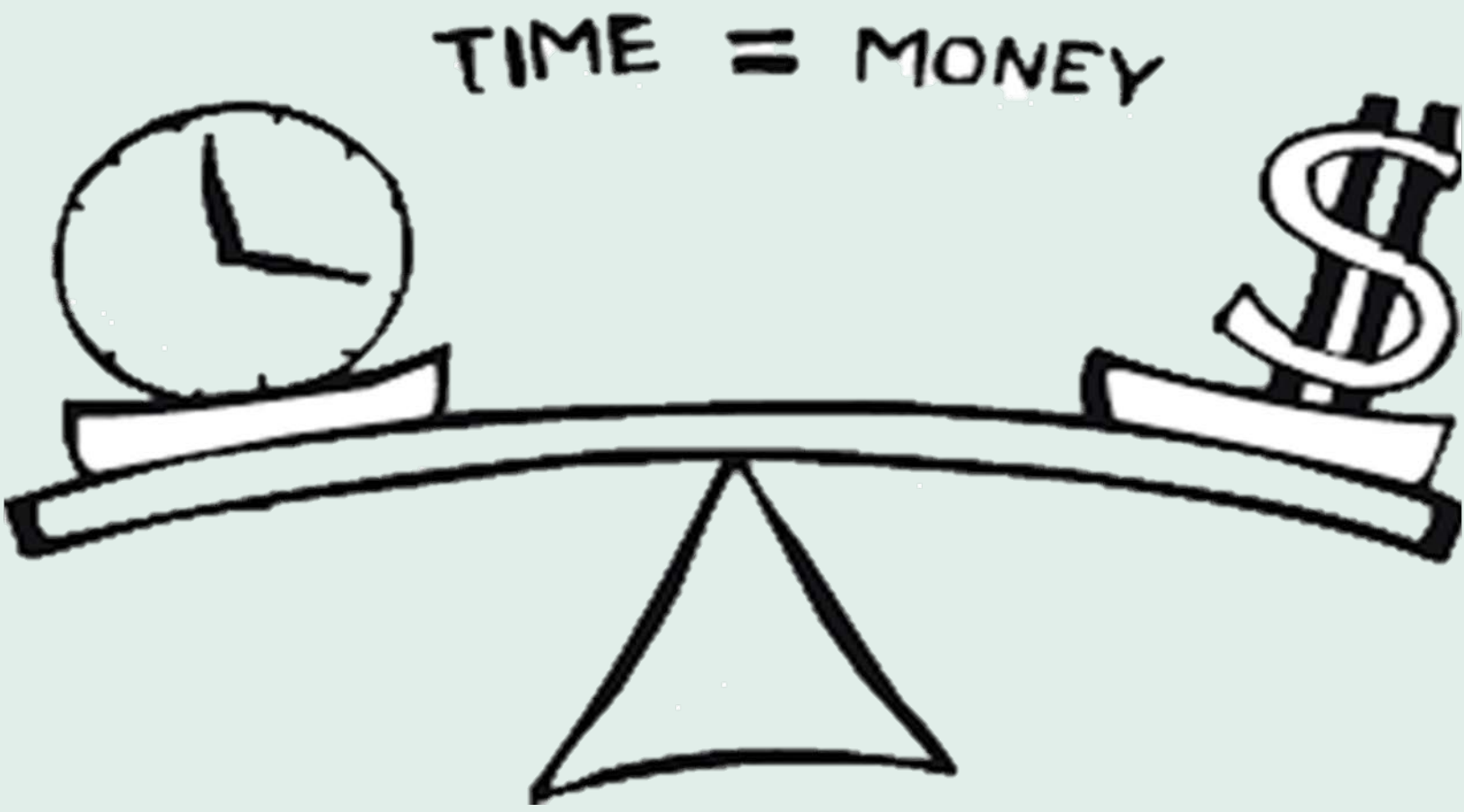


## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion my research has shown that most local students that know about Parkland and have a strong interest in attending the University of Illinois consider the Parkland Pathway Program as the best option between the choice of beginning as a freshman at the University of Illinois and being a full-time Parkland student that transfers to the University of Illinois.

From the small pool of U of I students that I interviewed many of them came from outside of Champaign but from inside Illinois which made them eligible for the Pathway program but the majority stated that community colleges they considered were located closer to their homes.

Students at Parkland that have left the program stated that the reason they left was due to a change in major which lead to a change in college not participating in the Pathway program or the length exceeds the four semesters that the program allows.



Did your major influence your decision? "I am undecided so yes it did in a way, because I could justify going to Parkland undecided but not going to the U of I as a full time student."

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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